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ABSTRACT

This in-depth study of school curricula in Zimbabwe examines curriculum development and its relationship to state politics in postcolonial third-world nations. An important assumption of the research is that curriculum is a powerful political tool, particularly in newly independent African states; hence, radical curricular revisions were to be expected under the new postcolonial policies. Yet, these revisions have largely failed to materialize, and it is the position of this paper that the persistence of curriculum continuity in the face of significant sociopolitical change has never been adequately accounted for. "Continuity" is defined as the lack of change in curriculum content from the colonial to the postcolonial period. The paper discounts the following four explanations for curriculum continuity: (1) the technicist model, which argues that better social results are brought about by greater managerial efficiency and better texts; (2) dependency, which links curriculum continuity to reliance on Western knowledge; (3) the cultural-relevance model, which attributes lack of curriculum change to the incompatibility between the assumptions of local culture and imported curriculum models; and (4) legitimation, which assumes that policies of the new state are problematic to begin with. The research assesses the effects of history and politics on Zimbabwe's educational decisions, and shows that attempts toward curriculum reform had different and sometimes contradictory motivations and consequences. Though unsuccessful, these attempts represent genuine efforts to radicalize the colonial curriculum. The paper details the development of "The Political Economy of Zimbabwe," a controversial Marxist-Leninist curriculum, and examines issues of the national debate that followed its introduction. The document concludes that state politics maintain primacy in determining school curriculum in third world states, that historical and social forces have had a conditioning effect on Zimbabwe's curriculum decisions, and that the policy options available in the fragile political environment of the transition are extremely limited. (TES)

THE STATE AND CURRICULUM IN TRANSITION SOCIETIES THE ZIMBABWEAN EXPERIENCE

Much still remains to be done if African education systems, either in their curricula or their methods are to be divorced from colonial systems¹

Across curriculum perspectives, there is a broad consensus in the literature that postcolonial curriculum reconstruction has failed in fundamental ways²

Curricular forms persist (in the third world) and have recognizable genealogies³

1. INTRODUCTION

In varying degrees, curriculum continuity besets every post-colonial state. Textbooks, syllabi and examinations reflect their colonial heritage. Radical curriculum policies have done little to change curriculum practice. Why?

Through an in-depth case study of curriculum innovation in Zimbabwe, this paper will demonstrate a) the failure of existing explanations (namely, technicist, dependency, cultural relevance, and legitimation paradigms) to adequately account for curriculum continuity in the third world; b) the primacy of conflict, the state and politics as determinants of the school curriculum in third world transition states; and c) the theoretical contributions of this perspective on curriculum continuity in transition societies.

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2. TERMINOLOGY:

Curriculum continuity is used in this paper to refer to the relative stability in the colonial curriculum content (as codified in textbooks, syllabi and examinations) during the postcolonial period. Following independence, most African nations embraced an educational policy which sought to radically revise the inherited colonial curriculum. Today, in almost every postcolonial nation, there is evidence of greater continuity with the colonial curriculum than the radical change envisaged by official policy.

Transition states refer to those African states which have adopted a (broadly defined) socialist policy for the reconstruction of the colonial society in general and the inherited educational system in particular. The term "transition states" does not assume a teleological route for the transition; that is, there is nothing inevitable about such a transition, and the outcomes (projected and actual) may vary among the different radical states that declare themselves to be "in-transition-to-socialism." The focus of this study is on understanding the process during which radical intentions for curriculum reconstruction are subverted by political conditions in the period following independence.

3. ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND CURRICULUM: SOME PROPOSITIONS

An important assumption governing this research is that the school curriculum could be viewed as a powerful political

symbol.⁴ Specifically, an influential body of work has emerged to suggest that the curriculum is a most important arena in which the ideology of the state is both projected and contested⁵. This literature utilizes an analytical approach in which the curriculum is treated in terms which Murray Edelman might well describe as one of "the referents of politically significant signs."⁶

The curriculum is a site of conflict and contestation because it embodies the values, norms, objectives, interests, priorities and directions of the state and other powerful sectors of society.⁷ There are, therefore, "linkages [that] exist between abstract planning models and structures of domination in the socio-cultural and political spheres."⁸

My contention is that the symbolic value of curriculum is particularly powerful in newly independent African states, where a high premium is placed on uprooting the ideology and values of the colonial class within the context of local struggles and international power relations. An analysis of the curriculum in Zimbabwe will therefore "signify" (Edelman) the political directions, struggles and contradictions expressed through the policies of the new state.

4. EXISTING EXPLANATIONS FOR CURRICULUM CONTINUITY

While, as noted above, there is a broad consensus on the fact of curriculum continuity in the third world, the explanations for this phenomenon vary greatly. Four principal

explanations can be distinguished:

4.1 the technicist explanation:

The dominant explanation in the comparative education literature attributes continuity to the inadequacies of the technological characteristics, processes and outcomes of curriculum.⁹ Inputs, outputs, effectiveness and efficiency are emphasised to the exclusion of other possible explanations (hence the label, "technicist"). As a very current World Bank film on primary schooling in the third world deceptively assumes: if only there were greater managerial efficiency, more effective planning and more and better textbooks, significant social and economic benefits will inevitably be gained.

While problems of technology remain as important impediments to curriculum change in the third world, such an approach has severe limitations. The key problem with technical explanations is the understatement or outright denial of the political bases for curriculum contestation in Africa. It has been shown that the course of curriculum change in Africa was determined in large part by conflicting political pressures and expectations, including popular demands for academic education, the state's proclaimed ideology, and the interests of multinational publishing companies in shaping the content and materials for classroom instruction.¹⁰ It is clear, for example, that the choice of languages in the school curriculum will not be settled simply by eloquent linguistic theories or efficient curriculum delivery systems¹¹. Because curriculum is largely a symbolic form

reflecting power relationships in society, political processes constitute a large part of the explanation for curriculum continuity.

4.2 the dependency explanation:

Dependency theory attributes curriculum continuity in developing nations to the imposition of and reliance on Western knowledge, beliefs and values expressed in the school curriculum.¹²

While dependency-related explanations advance the analysis of curriculum continuity considerably, there are a number of constraints in this particular framework. First, dependency has been used largely as a descriptive construct to explain the nature of the post-colonial curriculum. It has been less successful in demonstrating the political processes which undermine or promote curriculum change. Second, dependency has focused largely on the contemporary dimension of linkages to international systems and not on the historical (colonial) determinants of existing curricular arrangements.¹³ Third, dependency has highlighted the important external determinants of curriculum with little attention to the internal/national dynamics affecting curriculum patterns in the independent states. And finally, dependency has not explained why radical (transition) states in Africa, explicitly committed to the limiting the influence of "Western imperialism", cannot successfully transform the school curriculum.

4.3 the 'cultural adaptation' explanation:

The cultural relevance model attributes continuity to the lack of "fit" between the assumptions of imported curriculum models and the cultural characteristics of the local context.¹⁴ Since the curriculum models transported to Africa were developed in Western contexts and governed by Western assumptions, they failed to produce significant change in the local school curriculum.

While this model elaborates one important aspect of dependency theory (uncritical adoption of Western models), it still avoids the question of politics. Of course, successful curriculum change requires in part an appropriate matching of curriculum to context. However, the treatment of culture in this literature is itself apolitical, failing to recognize how cultural tradition and transformation are themselves products of colonial manipulation (consider, for example, the invention of tribe and ethnicity as "cultural" manifestations). Moreover, no third world societies are monocultural, and the divergent political pressures on the state and curriculum from different social groups are in no small part a function of cultural location (again, contestation over the choice of language in the post-colonial curriculum is illustrative). Furthermore, the close matching of curriculum and a particular culture is normally construed mainly in psychological terms (assumption: cultural adaptation leads to improved learning), ignoring again the political factors which circumscribe or transform the school curriculum.¹⁵

4.4 The 'compensatory legitimation' explanation.

This view is compelling as a political explanation for curriculum continuity and requires further discussion.

Legitimation theory starts from the assumption that state policy is problematic to begin with.¹⁶ Curriculum policy, in this view, is merely an attempt by the state to "compensate" for its eroding legitimacy as a result of the failure to reduce the inequalities of the inherited capitalist system¹⁷. The mere public display of curriculum policy therefore has political advantages which may have little to do with the impact on curriculum practice¹⁸.

The first difficulty with this approach is the ascription of ulterior motives on the part of the transition state (put bluntly, that the state does not mean what it proclaims); this raises questions of both methodology (how does one demonstrate insincerity in such a short period of independence?) and ethics (can one really assume conspiracy in public policy on the part of a new state which came to power after a long and devastating struggle for liberation?). Second, this approach fails to account for actual changes in the curriculum which may be broadly described as "socialist." And third, while this approach correctly assumes the precarious nature of state power in the face of capitalist crisis, it does not account for the varied (non-state) sites of conflict and struggle that characterize transition society.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The search for a more powerful explanation for curriculum continuity has recently received considerable impetus in a volume entitled Education and Social Transition in the Third World.

In this book the authors, Carnoy and Samoff¹⁹, advance three theses concerning educational (and curriculum) change in the transition:

1. that historical structures condition²⁰ the behavior of the state in the transition so that educational policy and politics have to be interpreted in reference to both historical and political contexts.
2. that the state is the principal force in shaping transition society so that politics (not economics) dominates social transformation;²¹
3. that the dialectical nature of education in the transition is characterized by "struggles for greater equality of political power in the state by the forces of democratization against the forces of reproduction".²²

In this paper these three theses of 'transition state theory' will be used as guiding framework but at the same time re-examined for their utility in explaining curriculum continuity in Zimbabwe.

6. A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This paper presents a case study of curriculum innovation in Zimbabwe. The specific methods include content analysis of

curriculum documents and newspaper articles, and a set of intensive interviews with officials in the Ministry of Education, with participants in the state's Curriculum Development Unit, and especially with those who were initially involved in the development of the controversial curriculum, The Political Economy of Zimbabwe (PEZ). Interviews were conducted with participants in the curriculum development process on both sides of the issue: those who favored the implementation of PEZ and those who were opposed. This investigation was somewhat circumscribed by the fact that there was extreme sensitivity among participants about publicly expressing views on this controversy, and that most of the documents-in-preparation (e.g. textbooks) for this curriculum were inaccessible.

CURRICULUM CONTINUITY IN TRANSITION STATES: A ZIMBABWEAN CASE STUDY

7. GENERAL OVERVIEW

With the advent of political independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean state inherited a colonial curriculum which has been criticized as racist, elitist, Eurocentric, competitive, individualistic, and capitalist-oriented.²³ The victorious ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) Party of Robert Mugabe immediately announced the intention to direct its reconstruction program in accordance with the tenets of 'scientific socialism.'

Curriculum reconstruction became one of the most important educational priorities of the socialist state. The curricular

goals espoused by the new state were quite specific:

1. to develop a socialist consciousness among students.
2. to eliminate the distinction between manual and mental labor.
3. to adapt subject-matter content to the Zimbabwean cultural context.
4. to foster co-operative learning and productive development strategies as art of the school curriculum.
5. to increase opportunities for productive employment.²⁴

Several educational strategies were planned, and many implemented, which suggested a serious effort by the state to translate policy into practice: a system of mass schooling to give all students access to the curriculum; the construction of experimental (pilot) socialist schools (the so-called ZIMFEP schools) to engage students in productive agricultural activities with the view to increasing employment prospects; and the decision in 1986 to provide a compulsory vocational curriculum at some level of schooling for all students.

8. GENERAL ASSESSMENTS IN THE LITERATURE ON CURRICULUM CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE SINCE INDEPENDENCE

In the period immediately following independence a range of assessments of educational and curriculum change surfaced in Zimbabwe which described reform efforts as "cosmetic",²⁵ "skin deep"²⁶ and "smacking of retardation"²⁷. These assessments can be dismissed as superficial, given the time frame required in any situation for proposals to be translated into practice, especially in a situation where the first and pre-occupying priority of the state was educational expansion.

However, as the dust of reform rhetoric settles at the end of the first decade of independence, a much clearer picture is

emerging on the course of attempted curriculum changes. In general, there is a strong realization on the part of policy-makers, practitioners and independent researchers that Zimbabwe's school system is characterized by more curriculum continuity than actual change. The euphoric days when the socialist vision of what education and curriculum in Zimbabwe should be was celebrated,²⁸ are now being replaced by a far more cautious and qualified assessment. According to Education Minister Fay Chung:

It remains to be seen whether Zimbabwe will be able to make use of its invaluable post-independence experiences in education to make further strides towards socialist transformation, or whether these innovations will remain as minor deviations.²⁹

Where the early days of independence were characterized by a call for socialist education, there is now a very public debate on increasing "efficiency", raising "standards" and improving "quality" (both defined conventionally; that is, not in terms of socialist referents). And the general commentary on curriculum change is that "...there has so far been no radical transformation of the curriculum to facilitate the achievement of national objectives."³⁰

But these are general statements and observations. In section 10 I will present a detailed case study of curriculum change in history at the high school level. First, let's examine the historical and structural context of contemporary curriculum innovations in Zimbabwe.

9. THE HISTORICAL-STRUCTURAL CONTEXT OF CURRICULUM RECONSTRUCTION

Recall that Carnoy and Samoff's³¹ first thesis concerns the conditioning effect of "historical structures" on the process of educational reconstruction. The reference to "historical structures" suggests that socio-economic development in Third World states is not simply a reflection of international forces but in large part a result of particular histories, social movements, forms of state, class alliances and policy choices at the local level.³²

What, then, are the historical-structural factors shaping reconstruction in Zimbabwe, and to what extent are they 'determinining'? For the sake of convenience I will classify those factors into two categories: historical-educational and historical-political.

The historical-educational factors are easily identifiable: [1] the inherited colonial education system reflecting its legacy through the curriculum (largely academic), administration (a modern [former white] and underdeveloped [still largely black] educational sector), teaching (rote learning sustained by underprepared teachers), and evaluation (largely controlled by the Cambridge Examination Syndicate); and [2] the dominant values (favoring reproduction of the status quo) of settlers and black parents as shaped by the colonial social and educational system.

The principal historical-political factors include [1] an underdeveloped capitalist economy from which to launch comprehensive and radical change; [2] the restrictions imposed by the Lancaster House Agreement which provided for a negotiated end

to colonial rule but forestalled radical transformation of the economy; [3] the regional destabilizing role of South Africa at great costs to the front-line states including Zimbabwe; and [4] the rise to power of a 'petty-bourgeois' black leadership with minimal control over the capitalist economy. Of course, these factors do not directly influence educational policies. However, they are likely to circumscribe the possibilities for radical change in terms of available resources and the strength of official commitment to socialist education.

It remains a formidable task to assess to what extent these factors are "determining" in the sense of undermining radical change. The emerging literature on the subject is itself divided on this issue, but can be roughly grouped into three camps.

The deterministic thesis, represented by Astrow, dismisses the possibility of any transition to socialism based on "the predictable result of the nationalist leaderships' class interests."³³ Extrapolating Astrow's thesis to education, the class-nature of the state and the nationalist character of the liberation struggle precludes any radicalization of curriculum (or social policy in general).

The transitional thesis, represented by Mandaza,³⁴ concedes that the leadership is 'petty-bourgeois' and that the inherited situation is 'neo-colonial'. However, the Mandaza position does not foreclose the possibility of 'transition to socialism' since the outcome of ongoing struggles, conflicts and pressures within the state are as yet undecided. Education, in this thesis, is

deeply tied to the colonial system but capable of transformation.

The empirical thesis, represented by Davies,³⁵ empirically examines specific areas of state intervention to assess socialist intent.³⁶ Davies' study concludes that "we find it difficult to explain why Zimbabwe should be regarded as transitional rather than just capitalist."³⁷ While in 1988 Davies may have been willing to concede (like Mandaza) the possibility of transition,³⁸ he now (1990) reviews the evidence to find "a much clearer picture...there is no transition likely or possible" at this stage.³⁹ In this position education is unlikely to be transformed since there is no empirical evidence to suggest that such a process will come about.

These three positions are not very helpful in explaining the actual trajectory of curriculum reconstruction during independence since they simplistically dichotomize transition/lack of transition on a macro-theoretical level without getting inside the process of change in specific areas of policy.

The research for this paper revealed that state-led curriculum change has been attempted but with different (if not contradictory) ideological motivations and consequences. Three examples will suffice. First, Education with Production (EWP) is the curriculum innovation most closely associated with socialist policy. It emphasizes vocationalism, productive activities and self-reliance. Second, ZIMSCI (Zimbabwe Science), a widely-heralded innovation, is not 'socialist' by any measure; it is a program which already existed prior to independence with the

general characteristics of 'modern science'--fostering inquiry, experimentation, and student-centered learning. Third, my review of the history curriculum at O-level suggests that the different, and optional, school texts approved by the state include a range of ideological orientations from pure Africanization of content to 'scientific socialism'.⁴⁰ Three preliminary conclusions can be drawn:

1. there is no single or consistent ideological orientation to the curriculum reconstruction program;
2. curricula closest to the 'socialist' agenda remain marginal in the national education system (there are still only 8 schools using EWP programs) with little chance of national adoption;⁴¹ and
3. the wide range of curricular choice in science (12 courses for the same year) or history (at least 8 different texts) potentially reduces any conflicts which may arise with a strictly socialist, common curriculum.

To all this, there was one exception--a curriculum called The Political Economy of Zimbabwe. This curriculum was a) a thoroughly socialist curriculum, b) to be implemented on a national basis, and c) as a compulsory program using prescribed texts. Given such an unambiguous attempt to radicalize the school curriculum, this experience will be used to shed some light on both the nature and influence of the forces directing and undermining change.

10. THE HISTORY CURRICULUM: THE FATE OF "THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ZIMBABWE"

10.1 Introduction

Shortly after independence, and under the leadership of Fay Chung, then director of the state's Curriculum Development Unit (hereafter referred to as the CDU), a plan was conceived to develop a radical history curriculum for Zimbabwe's secondary schools. This curriculum would be the most direct reflection of the socialist orientation of the new state, and would be required of all students and schools in independent Zimbabwe.

By 1985 serious work began on the development of a syllabus, and a national panel of educationists from across the country was constituted, including lecturers at teacher training colleges and the university. A series of panel meetings was convened in 1985 on both a national and regional basis to develop this new syllabus, to be called The Political Economy of Zimbabwe (hereafter called PEZ). By early 1987 a final draft of the syllabus was produced and forwarded to the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of the CDU, Fay Chung, apparently before final discussions were held among CDU members. The Annual Report of the Secretary of Education for that year (1987) proudly announced the completion of the new PEZ syllabus.⁴² The first examination of this two year course was planned for 1990.

Before examining the societal response to PEZ, it may be useful to briefly describe the syllabus itself.

10.2 The PEZ Syllabus

The syllabus consists of six parts. PART ONE, the

introduction, summarizes the context and purpose of the syllabus as follows:

In the colonial history of Zimbabwe, pupils were subjected to a capitalist view of life. Independent Zimbabwe has chosen scientific socialism as the guiding ideology for its social, economic and political programme. This syllabus is therefore intended to acquaint pupils with the fundamentals of Political Economy.⁴³

And in this regard, "The subject matter will be taught from the Marxist-Leninist perspective."⁴⁴

PART TWO outlines the methodology which suggests several methods designed to "foster group spirit and collective consciousness."⁴⁵ These methods include visits to co-operatives and the formation of Marxist-Leninist study groups and clubs.

In PART THREE five general aims are stipulated, broadly concerned with developing self-reliance, critical analytical skills, understanding capitalist and colonial ideas, and developing critical consciousness of socialist issues in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the third world. This would enable pupils to (aim #5) "play a meaningful role in the national transformation to socialism through a creative approach towards socialist development and the problems related to it."⁴⁶

PART FOUR is a more detailed specification of instructional objectives, based on the aims in part three, as is PART FIVE which contains related assessment objectives.

PART FIVE is the most substantial and enumerates 12 themes containing the content for the course:

1. Introduction to political economy: the meaning, method (=historical materialism), motive and origins of Political

Economy.

2. Labour and production as the basis of social life: the different productive forces and their social character.

3. The development of human society: modes of production, production relations, the social product and commodity production.

4. Property relations: personal, private, public, collective and social property.

5. Social formation: economic base and superstructure, and their interaction.

6. Classes and class struggle: class definitions, the emergence of classes, class alliances, class struggles and the classless society.

7. The state: the role and forms of the state, the state apparatus, and the state and revolution.

8. Socialism: the economic and political bases of socialism; and analyses of the problems and achievements of socialism.

9. Pre-colonial modes of production in Zimbabwe: pre-capitalist modes of production (primitive communal, slave and feudal) and pre-capitalist class formation.

10. Imperialism and colonialism in Zimbabwe: colonial occupation and its relationship to capitalism and imperialism; resistance to colonialism.

11. The struggle for national liberation: race and class under colonialism; phases of the national liberation struggle.

12. Postcolonial Zimbabwe and the struggle for socialism: assessment of the national liberation struggle, neo-colonialism, counter-revolution. Consideration of "problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism in Zimbabwe."⁴⁷

PART SIX simply concludes with the statement "EVALUATION" noting that "all work set for the two years will be examinable."⁴⁸

In sum, the syllabus contains an important, distinctive element absent from other history syllabi being used in Zimbabwe: a clear commitment and comprehensive plan for teaching the

principles, methods and aims of Marxism-Leninism in and for the Zimbabwean context. Furthermore, those compiling the syllabus clearly saw their task as interpreting and implementing state policy through the medium of this curriculum (this was repeatedly confirmed in several interviews with key participants).

10.3 The societal response to PEZ

The community reception of PEZ was nothing short of disastrous for the new state. First, a vibrant debate broke out in the local newspapers, particularly through the pages of The Sunday Mail, about the appropriateness of PEZ for Zimbabwe. Foremost in this debate was the Catholic Church.⁴⁹ There were several interesting issues raised in the debate, and of interest to the broader analysis of this paper:

ISSUE # 1: while declaring it's loyalties to both the liberation struggle and a specific definition of socialism, the Catholic Church resisted PEZ on the grounds that it was anti-God and anti-religion. Speaking frequently on the PEZ debate for the Catholic Church, Fr Oskar Wermter insisted that

we cannot tolerate that the students in our schools are fed with anti-religious propaganda under the guise of 'scientific socialism' as is happening already in our teacher training colleges.⁵⁰

According to Wermter, "the Church does insist...on the right of parents to provide their children with a Christian education."⁵¹ It is important to note that the Catholic Church was sympathetic to a particular version of socialism; as cited by Fr Oskar Wermter at an early stage in the debate, from a pastoral

statement of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1984:

In Zimbabwe socialism is understood to mean equality regardless of race, creed or sex, an equitable distribution of land, health care and education for all regardless of income; it means fair wages, a life-style of self-reliance as well as of sharing, the promotion of co-operative ways of production and a national policy of reconciliation.⁵²

This was not, however, the 'scientific socialism' as envisaged by the Zimbabwean state.

ISSUE # 2: a second view on the debate was that Christianity and socialism were compatible in philosophy, method and objectives, and that there was in fact NO conflict between religion and the PEZ syllabus. As N.C.G. Mathema argued through the pages of the Sunday Mail:

Christianity and communism have one fundamental position - they are against the exploitation of one person by another...[they] are also against racism and apartheid, tribalism and the division of society into classes.⁵³

Parenthetically, this idea of compatibility between Christianity and socialism is also supported by the first President of Zimbabwe, Reverend Canaan Banana.

ISSUE # 3: a third perspective on the debate was directly the opposite, namely, that Christianity and socialism were incompatible. Religion was mystification, socialism was science. H.M. R. Farinya spoke for many within the Ministry of Education and the government in general, when he argued that:

It would be a misfortune if our schools would be shut to progressive thinking only because a few religious obscurantists are intent in going back to the darkness of the middle ages. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education would do well in finding means to avoid open confrontations with the churches, but

certainly scientific knowledge cannot be disfigured for the sake of expediency. Relativity should be taught as Einstein explained it...The same applies to Marx.⁵⁴

In a letter responding in part to Farinya, another contributor to the Sunday Mail, Bernard Chisvo, was more blunt:

To be a bit crude, but simple and honest, Marxism-Leninism is a problem-solving tool and Christianity is a [cover] for problems caused by the evils of capitalism or imperialism. Yes, that is why the church elders are rich, pretend to be apolitical and in Africa are used by capitalists as compradores or bogus leaders or "internal settlement leaders."⁵⁵

The mission schools, and in particular the Catholic Church schools, resisted fiercely the imposition of this new, compulsory curriculum in their institutions. In addition, leading publishers of the accompanying textbooks stalled on the further development and production of materials, creating a major obstacle to implementation of PEZ. Then, on May 7, 1989, the decision to withdraw the curriculum was reported in the Sunday Mail under the caption "State to revise Political Economy teaching plans." According to the paper, "The government is to reconsider how political economy can be taught in schools so that it will be acceptable to mission-sponsored schools..."⁵⁶ A series of contradictory events then unfolded in the wake of the state's decision to withdraw the curriculum.

The reasons for the withdrawal of PEZ as given by the Ministry of Education and several ZANU-officials were multiple. First, there was an attempt to simply write off the problem as an inadequacy in the actual curriculum development process: a lack of consultation with relevant communities, a high level of

theoretical abstraction in PEZ which was inappropriate for the cognitive level of secondary school students, and a need to further develop some of the original concepts presented in the syllabus. Second, there was an attempt to play down the conflict at the same time as the Church came under attack for its resistance. According to Minister Chung, "the conflict, if any, is being blown out of proportion by the right-wing churches which are speaking out of prejudices fuelled by superficial knowledge of political economy."⁵⁷ At the same time, the Minister is reported as saying that:

If the Roman Catholic Church...had been able to support the workers and peasants during the liberation struggle she could not see the reason why the church could not support the teaching of political economy. By attempting to resist the introduction of political economy in the schools...the church was reverting to the middle ages and the period of the renaissance, when it opposed the progressive march of political and scientific knowledge as "anti-God"⁵⁸.

Third, at the same time as the withdrawal of PEZ, the criticism of the Church, and the apparent commitment to revision, Minister Chung then attacked the PEZ panelists. In particular, she isolated for criticism the "Stalinists" who racked "division among the panelists who worked on the old draft of syllabus because of their doctrinaire approach to political economy."⁵⁹ The interesting question that remains, of course, is why the Ministry approved the final draft of the syllabus, only to subsequently turn on the panelists themselves.

Finally, the Ministry then reiterated its commitment to the new syllabus at a future date following appropriate revisions.

Towards the end of 1989 the Cabinet reviewed PEZ and found nothing disturbing in it's content, and promised adoption by all schools following ratification by the state. But by the end of 1987 several teachers training colleges were already using the PEZ syllabus in their curriculum. Whether or not the Ministry will re-introduce PEZ at the secondary school level is uncertain, despite the Minister's promise that the new syllabus "will emulate the present Cambridge examination developmental studies"⁶⁰ syllabus taught by some schools at the O-level⁶¹.

9. INTERPRETATION AND POSSIBLE THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE PEZ CASE STUDY

There are several theoretical issues of a more general nature that could be derived from this study of the state and curriculum in Zimbabwe.

1. The relationship between the state and curriculum is clearly demonstrated in two ways:

a. curriculum change: the new state (rather than some decentralized or international agency) intervened directly in an attempt to replace the colonial-capitalist curriculum with one which most clearly reflected the socialist ideology of the new state.

b. curriculum continuity: the fact that change is resisted, makes the unchanged curriculum a powerful indicator of the broader struggles and conflicts in society acting in opposition to the state's agenda.

In this respect the state is indeed, as Carnoy and Samoff⁶²

propose, the principal shaper of transition society. In so doing, the state becomes not only the focal point of change but the site of resistance, as struggles for the transition proceed.

2. The second principle outlined by Carnoy and Samoff, that the character of educational conflict in the transition is determined by "struggles for greater equality of political power in the state by the forces of democratization against the forces of reproduction,"⁶³ is problematic in this case study. It would be difficult to place the Catholic Church in the position of one of "the forces of reproduction" given its progressive role in the liberation struggle and, in particular, its commitment to some form of socialism.⁶⁴ In fact, it could be argued that [a] the Church's desire to reserve space for Christian schools was in fact a struggle for democratization, and [b] that the Church-State conflict could at best be described as a struggle over the meaning of socialism. The predominantly class-based explanation for conflict in the Carnoy/Samoff contribution must, in this context, be qualified, if not revised.

This suggests a research agenda which reconsiders the relationship between revolution and religion not simply as antithetical forces (Marx, and especially Engels), but one which takes account of situations (such as Nicaragua and El Salvador) where "religion has an enormous influence over the revolutionary process and has provided the inspiration for many contemporary

revolutionaries."⁶⁵ Such an analysis is particularly pertinent in Zimbabwe, where the Catholic church is likely to continue to play a central role in further attempts to influence education and curriculum at the secondary level.

3. The political fragility of the Third World transition state, as in Zimbabwe, is beyond question. As stated in Carnoy and Samoff,⁶⁶ and as demonstrated above, historical-structural factors condition the policy behavior of the Zimbabwean state. Across the ideological spectrum, from within the state and among it's critics, these factors have been identified as strongly limiting the options for radical transformation⁶⁷.

Even though ZANU still has considerable popular support, and it's radical agenda has recently (the 1989 Party Congress) been confirmed, the power base of the church both on it's own terms (a major source of funding for private schools) and as an indirect contributor to broader political challenges (such as the new opposition party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement), forces the state to act cautiously in promoting curriculum change.

10. CONCLUSION

In short, this study finds support for two of the three principles of education-in-transition proposed by Carnoy & Samoff⁶⁸. First, the conditioning effect of both history and politics on Zimbabwe's curriculum decisions has been outlined. Second, the primacy of politics in the transition has specifically been demonstrated in the case study. And third, the

nature of the conflict as one of reproduction versus democratization has been criticized as simplistic. Struggles over the meaning and content of socialism in the transition cannot be ignored.

The overall explanatory power of transition state theory remains valid, however. Clearly the state's unsuccessful effort at curriculum change was not simply a case of resource availability, a paralysing dependency on the colonial or neo-colonial curriculum, a failure of cultural adaptation, or a delusory legitimation exercise. It was a genuine attempt, securing heavy investment⁶⁹ over several years, to radicalize the colonial curriculum. However, the policy options available in the fragile political environment of the transition are extremely limited. In this context, the political costs of reform cannot be excluded from the decision to implement.

This article is an extended version of a paper entitled "The State and Curriculum in Zimbabwe: In Search of Explanations for Curriculum Continuity," presented at the 1990 Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, Anaheim, California, USA.

ENDNOTES

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2. Jonathan Jansen, "Curriculum Reconstruction in Post-Colonial Africa: A Review of the Literature," International Journal of Educational Development 9,3 (1989), p.225.
3. Keith Lewin, "Quality in Question: A New Agenda for Curriculum Reform in Developing Countries," Comparative Education 21,2 (1985), p.120.
4. The familiar adage "show me your curriculum and I'll show you who is in power" is a shorthand way of stating the argument.
5. Michael Apple, "Regulating the Text: The Socio-historical Roots of State Control," Educational Policy 3, 2 (1989): 107-123; D.L. Carlson, "Curriculum Planning and the State: The Dynamics of Control in Education," in The Curriculum: Problems, Politics and Possibilities, eds. L.E. Beyer and M. Apple, (New York: SUNY Albany, 1988); Martin Carnoy and H. Levin, Schooling and Work in the Democratic State (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985); Jonathan Jansen, "Curriculum Policy as Compensatory Legitimation? A View from the Periphery," Oxford Review of Education, 16, 1 (1990):29-38; Hans Weiler, "Curriculum Reform and the Legitimation of Educational Objectives: The Case of the Federal Republic of Germany," Oxford Review of Education, 16, 1 (1990).

6. Murray Edelman, Constructing the Political Spectacle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p.2.
7. Weiler, "Curriculum Reform and the Legitimation of Educational Objectives..."
8. Carlson, p.98.
9. R.G. Havelock and A. Huberman, Solving Educational Problems: The Theory and Reality of Educational Innovations in Developing Countries, (Paris: UNESCO, 1977).
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11. D.M. Mbuyi, Beyond Policy and Language Choice, (New York: Comparative Education Center, SUNY Buffalo, 1987); E.B. Richmond, New Directions in Language Teaching in Sub-Saharan Africa, (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1983).
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14. R. Ingle and A. Turner, "Science Curricula as Cultural Misfits," European Journal of Science Education, 3, 4 (1981): 357-371.
15. J. Gay and M. Cole, The New Mathematics and an Old Culture: A study of learning among the Kpelle of Liberia (New York: Holt, 1967).
16. Hans Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy," Comparative Education Review, 27, 2 (1983): 259-277.
17. Jansen, "Curriculum Policy as Compensatory Legitimation?..."; Hans Weiler and H. Gonzalez, "Compensatory Legitimation: Exploring the Utility of the Construct for the Comparative Study of Educational Policy," Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Comparative & International Education Society, New York, 1982.
18. Hans Weiler, Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy: Legalization, Expertise and participation in comparative perspective, IFG Report, 81-A 17 (California: Stanford Institute for Finance and Government, 1981).

19. Martin Carnoy and J. Samoff, Education, Social Transformation and Transition States in the Third World, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990); [note that quotations and references in this paper are taken from a 1989 pre-publication draft of the book]; see also Joel Samoff, The Durability of Modernization, Unpublished Manuscript, (Stanford, California: Stanford University, Center for African Studies, 189).

20. The term "conditioned" is used in preference to the determinism implied in the more popular term "dependency." States have options for reform, and political and historical constraints only modify rather than cancel out such space.

21. The 'primacy of politics' is characteristic of more recent studies in neo-Marxist scholarship. See the review (especially chapter 5) in Vicky Randall and Robin Theobald, Political Change and Underdevelopment, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1988).

22. Carnoy and Samoff, p.75.

23. Fay Chung and E. Ngara, Socialism, Education and Development: A Challenge to Zimbabwe, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985).

24. These common curricular goals have been synthesized from statements starting with the Party's Election Manifesto (1980), declarations by the Prime Minister and President, the writings of senior Ministry officials, and the outline provided in the Three Year Transitional National Development Plan, 1982/83-1984/85.

25. Griff Foley, The Zimbabwean Political Economy and Education, 1980-1982, Unpublished MSS, Henderson Seminar Paper, University of Zimbabwe, no. 52, (August 1982).

26. J. Kalter, "Education in Zimbabwe: New Directions." Southern Africa, vol. XVI, no.1, (Jan/Feb, 1983).

27. "Education-Quo Vadis?" Moto no. 12, (May 1983), p.1.

28. Chung and Ngara, 1985.

29. Fay Chung, "Education: Revolution or Reform?" in Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa, ed. Colin Stoneman (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1988), p.132.

30. R.J. Zvobgo, "Education and the Challenge of Independence," in Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986, ed. Ibbo Mandaza (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 1986): pp.319-354.
31. Carnoy and Samoff, 1990.
32. This "historical-structural" approach was first formulated by two Latin American theorists in part as a response to dependency theory. See H. Cardoso and E. Faletto, Dependency and Development in Latin America, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, Berkeley).
33. Andre Astrow, Zimbabwe: A Revolution that Lost it's Way? (London: ZED Press, 1983), p.2.
34. Ibbo Mandaza, ed., Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986. (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 1986).
35. Rob Davies, "The Transition to Socialism in Zimbabwe: Some Areas for Debate," Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa, ed. Colin Stoneman (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1988).
36. A similar approach, using carefully-defined empirical indicators, is found in an anonymous article entitled "The Political Economy of Zimbabwe: Is Zimbabwe in Transition to Socialism?" in The South African Labour Bulletin, 12, 6/7 (August/September 1987): 39-47.
37. Davies, p.29.
38. Davies, p.30.
39. Personal interview, 6 February 1990.
40. For this review I used the two volumes for each of the following texts: Junior Certificate History for Zimbabwe (Longman Zimbabwe, 1986 and 1988); The African Heritage (Zimbabwe Educational Books, 1989); People Making History (Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985 and 1987); and Focus on History (College Press, 1988).
41. See Jansen, 1990.
42. Annual Report of the Secretary for Education, for year ended 31st December 1987, presented to the Parliament of Zimbabwe (Harare: Government Printer, 1988), p.11.
43. The Political Economy Syllabus, Zimbabwe Junior Certificate, Ministry of Education, 1989.

44. Political Economy, p.1.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., p.2.

47. Ibid., p.6.

48. Ibid., p.7.

49. While this paper concentrates on the role of the Catholic Church, it should not imply that the Church was the only opponent of the new curriculum. Parents of students, both black and white, spoke out on this issue as well. In addition, there were probably many other organizations (such as the conservative churches) who stood opposed to PEZ but did not have the legitimacy of the Catholic Church to confront the state so directly. In any case, the most visible and articulate opponent of PEZ was the Catholic Church, and this justifies its pre-eminence in the study.

50. Oskar Wermter, "Socialism: What has that to do with Zimbabwe's Liberation?" Sunday Mail, (21 May 1989), p.8.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.; cited from "Socialism and the Gospel of Christ," dated 1 January 1984.

53. N.C.G. Mathema, "Jesus Christ and Karl Marx Teachings have Similar Goals," Sunday Mail, (28 May 1989), p.8.

54. H.M.R. Farinya, "Political Economy Should be given a Chance," Sunday Mail, (May 1989), p.6.

55. Bernard Chisvo, "Political Economy must be Taught," Sunday Mail, (11 June 1989), p.8.

56. Quoted in article, "State to Revise Political Economy Teaching Plans," Sunday Mail, (28 May 1989), p.8.

57. Quoted by Sunday Mail reporters in article, "There is no going back says Chung," Sunday Mail, (11 June 1990), p.1, as part of an interview with Minister Fay Chung.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. This appeal to the prestigious colonial examination system is in itself revealing against the backdrop of socialist policy and anti-imperialist rhetoric.

62. Carnoy and Samoff, 1990.

63. Carnoy and Samoff, p.75.

64. This is not to deny, of course, the fact that other dimensions of conflict exist which are more easily defined along the reproduction/democratization axis. For example, on the issue of vocational/academic education alone there clearly exists contending views. See, among other sources, Clive Harber, "Weapon of War: Political Education in Zimbabwe," Journal of Curriculum Studies, 17, 2 (1985): 163-174; S. Horst, "Zimbabwe's Ex-Combatants Test New Models for Education," Christian Science Monitor, (Monday 2 May 1988), p.11; G.W. Knamiller, "The Struggle for Science Education in Developing Countries," Studies in Science Education, 11 (1984): 60-78; and C.G. MacKenzie, "Zimbabwe's Educational Miracle and the Problems it has Created." International Review of Education, 34, 3 (1988): 337-353.

65. Lawrence Littwin, "Religion and Revolution: A Brief for the Theology of Liberation," in The Socialist Register 1989, ed. Ralph Miliband et al., (London: The Merlin Press, 1989).

66. Carnoy and Samoff, 1990.

67. See the interesting review, "Approaches to the Study of Zimbabwe," (pages 1-7), in Stoneman & Cliff (1989).

68. Carnoy and Samoff, 1990.

69. Argues Bernard Chisvo (1989) through the pages of the Sunday Mail:

What people of Zimbabwe should know, is that the promise to have political economy introduced was officially blessed by the Ministry of Education which even went to the extent of using the taxpayers money to have seminars and workshops for in-service teachers and teaching/learning materials published to enable the subject to take off with ease. Thousands of dollars were just blown out, therefore, for no logical reason in the process (p.8).

END

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